

J C Jones
Memorial Lecture
1994

*Mission
and
Christology*

Lecturer;

THE RT REVD ROWAN WILLIAMS

Bishop of Monmouth

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One of the words you'll hear bandied around most often these days is 'pluralism': we live, we are told, in a society where we have to become familiar with pluralism in values and priorities - that's to say, in a society where it can't be guaranteed that anyone agrees with you about what's important. Religious pluralism poses a challenge to our educational systems, for instance, and controversy easily arises over what it means that there is legal provision for Christianity being given some kind of privileged place in school curricula; you'll often hear people saying that this is indefensible in a 'pluralist' society, where the state should not privilege any one bit of the tapestry of diverse worldviews. In the academic discipline of religious studies, 'pluralism' has come to mean an approach that considers all religious traditions to be of equal value and truthfulness: the differences are on the surface only. But it isn't just a religious problem. In effect, it is the same set of questions that arises when people try to define what counts as essential or central in art and culture. Is there a set of 'classics' on which (more or less) everyone can agree, things that every educated person should know about? Must all fourteen year olds know their Shakespeare? Or do we have to acknowledge that tastes and styles differ dramatically, so that it is as important for a fourteen year old to know about street poetry in Brixton or Trade Union songs in Lancashire as to know about Shakespeare - perhaps more important in the job of negotiating life in

Brixton or Lancashire. The most dramatic and extreme statement of this kind of understanding is the complex set of attitudes and intellectual styles we've come to call 'postmodernism': there are no classics because there can be no secure place to put or find authority any longer. What we have is an endless interplay of styles of doing things, styles to which no-one needs to be - or indeed can be - committed. We can only enjoy the playful combination of elements from anywhere and everywhere. The model for artistic or political or intellectual life is the teenage clothes shop. Truth is a very slippery idea indeed, and certainly not something we can usefully look for in the endless game of making whatever sense we choose of the world around us.

Some of this is, in fact, an unavoidable step forward in the way human beings understand themselves. Once upon a time, not so very long ago, it was still possible to think that there were straightforward things 'over there' that could be labelled by words and dissected by science, which could lay bare the hidden mechanisms that made them work. On such an assumption there was at least one kind of language that had nothing to do with interpretation and imagination: in the nice phrase of one modern theologian (David Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, SCM 1987), this kind of science was in search of 'a reality without quotation marks'. But gradually, thanks to developments in both science and philosophy this century, we have become aware that all we say is set in a context, all we say is the result of learning a language and a way of seeing things.

Nobody has a 'view from nowhere'; and instead of that leading to cynicism or despair about ever being truthful, this should make us alert to how the way we learn things shapes what we believe we know, not in a distorting fashion, but so as to guarantee that we are always likely to be enriched by other ways of seeing that we have emerged from other stories of learning. At best, the recognition of plurality in our ways of 'reading' the world means that our knowledge is always enlarging, always expectant of new slants and insights. This in turn can teach us patience with each other; it can help wean us away from the stubborn refusal to listen to other perspectives and understand why the world doesn't look the same to all. Pluralism at this level is simply the result of taking seriously what we have learned about learning itself; and it can be an essential element in discovering how to question the claims, whether of science or anything else, to have access to the one point of view that really counts.

But when this has been said, we are left with a fair number of problems in coming to terms with a pluralist context, some of them very serious indeed. Is there any point at which plurality finds a limit? Is absolutely any point of view admissible as possibly making sense? Astrology? Mythologies of racial superiority? Writers with strong pluralist sympathies always grant that there is something problematic here, but seldom seem able to provide a theoretical way out. Thus we find, for example, the Marxist philosopher, Roy Bhaskar, one of the most intellectually sharp and original presences in modern

British political thought, criticising the American Richard Rorty for his claims that we can draw a tidy line between the private sphere, where comprehensive visions and moralities are developed, and the public realm, in which awareness of the endless varieties in the things people say about the world guarantees a broadly liberal social order. In this perspective, Bhaskar argues, all politics is reduced to management; there is one and only one proper discourse for the public realm, and it is that of social engineering, in the sense of seeing that people don't get in each other's way too much. 'By dichotomizing private and public, singular individual and bourgeois community, Rorty cuts the ground from the possibility of radical transformative....democratic politics' (Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom, Blackwell 1991, p.91). There can be no moral sense transcending the life and interest of this or that group; and while this may be just about intelligible picture of how life might carry on in mutual tolerance within a reasonably economically homogeneous society, without huge gaps in welfare and power, or a wholly secularized society, with no competing ideologies maintaining starkly different pictures of the human good, it is not particularly helpful in the world we actually inhabit - even the Britain we actually inhabit.

Behind thoroughgoing pluralism, I want to suggest, lies a not very benign prospect, the prospect of a world in which there aren't and couldn't be real

discussion of the goals and destiny of human beings as such. In a world that was really morally pluralistic, we should simply have to shrug off the differences in people's interests, seeking only to discover a way of rubbing along without too much open conflict. But as soon as we encountered conflicts that weren't amenable to negotiation, or systems with mutually exclusive claims, we should be at sea, without even a proper vocabulary for discovering and committing ourselves to a good that was more than merely local or sectional. The concrete effect of this is a very un-liberal situation indeed where there is only struggle, the war of all against all that was the nightmare of both Hobbes and Kant. The Enlightenment, in which these two philosophers were such enormous influences, was an attempt, among other things, to set up a universal system of reason precisely so as to exclude the dangers of universal war; yet in its unrealistic hopes for reason, for an impersonal and universal language about human interests, it sowed the seed of the disillusion and fragmentation that now threatens. All that is left of the Enlightenment legacy in the pluralist situation is a loosely anti-dogmatic sentiment, a spirit of sceptical tolerance; and this is not an adequate instrument in the absence of the universal commitments that underpinned the classical rationalism of the Enlightenment at its peak. Roy Bhaskar, whom I quoted a few minutes ago, is, as a Marxist, still very much a child of the Enlightenment, who sees the open market of postmodernism as rather like the chaos

of Romanticism that had begun to swamp the Enlightenment spirit as early as the eighteenth century. Universal hopes give way to the fascination with the 'inner' self, its dramas and its complexities, and the harmony of philosophy and politics disappears.

Earlier political philosophers, from Augustine onwards, had stressed that personal morality and the moral vision of the political community should go hand in hand, each listening to the other. This ideal had its greatest exponent in Hegel, both the greatest critic of the Enlightenment and its greatest son. His conviction was that the supreme political goal was a condition where the individual, in full freedom and integrity, recognized that her or his welfare and purposes could only be understood and realised in and through the welfare and purposes of the entire community; a condition in which personal and common good were really seen to be identical. The price of pluralism, certainly in its postmodern varieties, is that such a political vision becomes meaningless. The gulf between the private and the public opens wider and wider; and there is, increasingly, no way in which the dispossessed or powerless in a society can hope to internalize the goals of the whole community because the community fails to operate any vital orienting towards a good that is really the good of all; the public order is no more than a policing operation, an exercise in damage control. And such, increasingly, is the society we inhabit, in the aftermath of the death of the Welfare State.

We ought to reflect more often than we usually do on the fact that to talk about mission in a society like ours, in a pluralist and privatised environment is a strange and rather subversive thing to be doing. The practice of mission takes for granted that it is possible to imagine a goal that might be open to any and every human subject, and to imagine a community in which the good of each is inseparable from the good of all. Let me unpack this briefly. Mission is before all else, the extending of an invitation. We have been brought into a situation in which, for various reasons, we have come to believe that certain foundational things about human capacity and human need have been laid bare ('revealed', if you like). This form of common life, we say, is the one that most comprehensively copes with the full range of human need, that guarantees most unequivocally both the place of genuinely different persons in their diversity, and the possibility of unrestricted fellowship. And what we imagine or perceive here, as Christians, is meaningless unless it is in some sense not restricted to 'here' and 'us'. The logic of what we say compels the acknowledgement that this cannot be a private or merely local thing. We could not rest content with saying, 'This is what is good for us, but it has no particular relevance to any other situation', without making nonsense of the substantive religious affirmations we are all the time making. Mission, in short, says, 'What is good for me is

inseparable from what is good for you; my discovery of what is good and desirable is ultimately bound up with how you discover this; and vice versa'.

Now this is dangerous stuff, in more than one way. It slips very easily into the confidence that I know what's good for others without any listening or attending to who they are and how they are finding their way towards the good. When we spell out what mission involves more fully, this ought to be obviously nonsense; but it is a powerful and popular distortion. If mission claimed that we had discovered or created a way of living in common that solved all our practical and theoretical difficulties about the common good and how to talk about it and work for it, mission would be little more than the exporting of a local commodity to foreign markets (which, of course, is how mission has so often appeared...). But properly theological language on the subject would have to insist that the unity Christians celebrate is not one we have negotiated by skill and patience, but one given, given in relation to something never possessed, never wholly within our grasp, a horizon to which we all look. We have been given a kind of 'belonging' that sits at an angle to all particular local loyalties and identities. To be converted is to discover a common perspective, not dependent on a specific group's concern or interest. This is not a view from nowhere, since no-one actually possesses such a

perspective. But in living together in relation to a reality beyond any one standpoint, we may discover that we arrive at a glimpse of this transcendent perspective only by expectant listening to each other, trusting that in this mutual reverent attention, we shall be taken beyond the clash of sectional warfare. It can sound rather like passive liberal tolerance; but what makes it different is that the plurality of voices and experiences in the Christian community is a plurality in which all are looking actively in each other for recognition, and, in looking for recognition, looking also for the echo or trace of the fundamental reality that has called us together in the first place.

Take this a bit further. Mission says: we have been given a way of living together, sharing a common purpose or project as human beings, that centres upon the imperative of dispossession: each part of the corporate whole has to let go of any definition of its interest or welfare that is exclusive to it alone. Thus the invitation or offer that grounds mission is an invitation to what will look like loss in the first instance. Here again is danger. One group saying to another, 'Let go of your self-definitions, your familiar identities, so as to belong with a community that lives in the interest of all' is almost bound to sound as if it is saying, 'Surrender your definitions so as to take on ours'. If that is how the invitation is heard, mission is indeed reduced to imperialism, a pretty shameless power play backed up by the claim of

divine sanction. And if such a claim is accepted on those terms, it can mean not entry into a community that is genuinely overcoming partial and local interests, but the internalizing of somebody else's definition. This is one of the most persistent criticisms made of 'classical' missionary activity, whether justly or not - that it effectively obliged cultures to see themselves through the eyes of strangers, to make their own an alien account of who they were, what they had been, how they had understood their common values. This not at all the same as learning to discover a common good belonging neither to one or the other partner in the encounter of mission; and its traumatic effects on non-European cultures have been fully enough documented.

One immediate implication of this, if we are to talk theologically about mission, is that authentic mission is always accompanied by repentance. What the mission encounter presents is a community aware of how it is itself under judgement, a community perceptibly in process of transformation away from exclusivity and uncriticised patterns of power. In other words, once we really start thinking about mission, we are obliged to learn something about the whole of our church life, obliged to look at whatever elements of it fail to speak of repentance and transfiguration. What's more, in this century, we have slowly and awkwardly begun to realise that the other partner in the mission encounter may also be an instrument to us of God's

judgement. We can be alerted to what we have missed or denied, to dimensions of human need and human faithfulness that our own previous Christian experience has not brought to light. We can find ourselves - as so many engaged in authentic mission do - simultaneously saying that the community created by Christ is the one which most fully allows all peoples and groups to be what God intends for them, and saying that the concrete community that bears Christ's name is constantly called to grow beyond what it thinks it has secured in encounter with the world that has not yet explicitly responded to Christ Mission offers both the wealth of a gift and the poverty of those who have first received it, a poverty that can only be satisfied in a fully reconciled human belonging that does not yet exist in the world. Two quotations from that remarkable Roman Catholic theologian, Cornelius Ernst, sum up something of what I want to say here;

'(The meaning of Christ) could only exist as a total human culture, the progressive discovery of a single human identity in Christ as the historic process of the diverse but related processes of self-discovery going on all over the globe in response to the challenge and threat of a uniform technological mass-culture....(The Church's) destiny is to "make known through the Church the manifest wisdom of God" (Eph.3.10) in that process by which God "recapitulates all things" (1.10) in Jesus Christ, the ontological meaning and identity of the multiple history of man' (Multiple Echo. Explorations in Theology, London 1979,

pp.85-6).

'We should seriously endeavour to understand the history of the Church from New Testament times onwards hermeneutically, as paradigmatic and exemplary, as a history of failure as well as of success' (ib.p.221).

These are dense formulations; but what I take them to mean is that we are at the same time confident of Christ as the one with whom all human persons and communities will finally discover what they can be before God, and aware of the dangers of reducing that vision to the claims of an institution whose record is at best uneven, and which constantly slips into treating itself as one community among others that must struggle to establish its power or supremacy over others. What Ernst is suggesting is that, while we have as a 'given' the fact of Christ as the one who makes possible the new humanity, the community without restriction, how this is to be fully understood and how exactly it is to become real in the diversity of actual human cultures is not given. It remains in the realm of hope. And historical failure of the Church to avoid turning itself into an 'imperial', dominating force in relation to non-Christian cultures stands as a reminder to theology and mission of the need to concentrate prayer and thought continually upon the source and empowerment of the community, not on the historical achievement of its members - not on the supposed or claimed possession of that universal recapitulation of which the text from Ephesians

speaks.

Now the relevance of all this to Christology needs spelling out. What I want to argue is that it is the experience of mission itself that energizes all Christological reflection - and that the converse also holds, that when mission ceases to be treated as an imperative, Christology dries up, and either becomes an arid defence of traditional formulations for their own sakes or else disappears altogether as a vital theological concern. Some such problem, I suspect, has been afflicting British theology for quite a while. I've suggested that what mission shows is the reality of community between human beings at a level that obliges us to identify our true and most serious interests with the interests of all; it is no longer possible to live as though others had aspirations and needs utterly diverse from ours, irrelevant to ours or fundamentally in competition with ours. This is a community in which any merely local project insofar as it implies competition and exclusion or denial of projects for the good of other groups is placed under judgement. Each movement or aspiration for healing, welfare, liberation is challenged to define itself in such a way that its continuity with a global hope can appear. But this community clearly faces a crisis of plausibility if all it can say of its origins or legitimation is that it depends on a particular local vision - an historical discovery made at one place and one time. And yet, what other kinds of

community are there except those that begin with the concrete and specific? How then could there be a concrete community that could with any sense claim to be 'speaking for' a universal perspective? This problem is, I believe, where Christology starts.

What seems to have happened in the New Testament era is that the specific community that formed around Jesus of Nazareth arrived at the conviction that it embodied a kind of human belonging together quite different from the other available options - loyalty to the sacred order of the state (which was, of course, a religious reality in the strictest sense at the time), loyalty to the ethnic group that had historically imagined itself as God's chosen. It took the narrative of God choosing a people and reworked it in a way both continuous and discontinuous with that earlier history of the people of Israel: God's 'choice' had once again been in operation, not so as to cancel the history of Israel, but in a way that extended the concept beyond its earlier bounds. The story of the Exodus and covenant had said, in effect, Here is a nation that exists not because of human negotiation and political achievement, but simply because of the impact within history of the desire of God that human corporate life should reflect his own nature ~~and~~ as justice and love, and so should be free from the rivalry and instability of human political constructions. For a variety of reasons, the effect of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus was to reinforce

this sense of God's desire in history, but also to relocate it: the focus was to be no longer simply the history of the Exodus, but the narrative of Jesus. or rather the person of Jesus. From now on, the people of God would be defined by their willingness to perceive God as Jesus perceived God, to trust or have 'faith' in his offer of God's acceptance. Readiness to answer Jesus' offer of the divine hospitality was what now counted, in the face of what Jesus and his generation saw as an impending crisis of unprecedented proportion - the time when God would act to judge the oppressive powers of the present world order, and to rescue and vindicate his people. When that judgement came, what would matter was whether one stood with God's people rather than the rebel systems of the godless world; and Jesus' good news is that to belong with God's people requires not flawless legal probity but the grateful welcoming of God's own welcome, embodied in Jesus' own person and practice.

The earliest Christian generations are busy working out the implications of this, not always smoothly and easily. God once chose Israel to be the people who would display to the world the justice and compassion that characterize the divine action itself, and Israel remains the model of what it means for God to make a community his own. But Jesus seems to say that God's choice of the people of Israel is only a sign, the tip of an iceberg: God is willing to 'choose' the entire human community, and the character of Israel as a

nation bound by covenant to justice and service and prayer is seen to be capable of extension beyond the historical people of Israel (hence Paul's phrase in Galatians about the church as the "Israel of God"). If response to Jesus' offer is what decides your belonging to God's people, it doesn't take great ingenuity to work out, as the Church soon did, that this new community was open to those who were not ethnic Jews.

But this in turn implies something about Jesus himself. Once non-Jews are admitted to the community, the assumption is being made that the offer Jesus makes is capable of being heard and understood by those who don't share the same history as the people of the historical covenant. The whole idea of covenant and judgement and vindication of the chosen depends, of course, on this history; yet the person who brings this story to a new and revolutionary focus, redrawing the boundaries of God's people, is not, it seems, bound by the past he shares with his people. What he says and does enables all people to understand their history anew. All people are called into community, ultimately, by God, not just by human negotiation and political achievement; all people inherit a history of betrayal and distortion of the possibilities of living together in a way transparent to the action and purposes of God; all people can rediscover their primordial vocation to communion with God and each other, and so discover how to live so that the self-destructive terrors of a history of violence and

infidelity will not overwhelm them. The history and the expectation of Israel, covenant, judgement, vindication, becomes a dramatic metaphor for the loss and recovery of authentic communion, reconciled living, in every human context.

Jesus' life, death and resurrection are the means by which this translation is enabled to take place; this history is the bridge between the local story of Israel and a story that might be universally pertinent. Only on the basis of a particular history could this come to light, only on the basis of a specific set of human memories and narratives - a people shaped out of chaos into covenanted order by a jumble of rather confused events recollected in a story of radical liberation from slavery and disintegration. The metaphor has to begin, like all metaphors, with a concrete referent. But only if this history is consciously probed and reworked from within does it become a transformative vehicle beyond its own home territory. The question that this raised for the first Christian generation was, therefore, something like this: 'Who has the authority so to rewrite the terms of this history as to make it potentially the history of the whole creation (not only human beings, but the entire environment that makes them human)?' Or, more directly and dramatically, 'Who has the authority to redefine what the call of God means, to specify what God desires? 'Because the story of Israel is only opened up as a universal sign and promise when Jesus

makes a concrete proposal, the proposal to redraw the frontiers of God's people in relation to himself and acts on that proposal in a way that is perceived as mortally threatening by those who dominate the defining and deciding structures of the religious and political context in which Jesus lives, the priestly oligarchy and the imperial administration.

A fuller discussion of all this would require an exposition of how exactly the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus establish, in the eyes of believers, that the agency that sustains Jesus' proposal, Jesus' reconstruction of what it is to belong with God, is an agency not vulnerable to defeat by any human rebellion or resistance. But you can, I hope, see emerging the conviction that the person of Jesus cannot be spoken of simply in terms of membership of a race, location within history. He is apparently not bound by his undeniable local identity as a Jewish artisan, an Aramaic-speaking villager in an occupied country during the eighth century of the Roman state's history. He is both a native and a stranger in that context; the discovery that occurs in the practice of mission is that he is both native and stranger in all human contexts, addressing fundamental searchings in the life of human communities, so that what he offers is recognizable, against all probability, in vastly diverse settings, and never simply being absorbed into any human context or system in such a way that he cannot speak beyond

it. And the way the Church finally found of expressing this was and is the doctrine that the human identity of Jesus is a rendering, an embodying of the divine self-manifestation and self-sharing: the incarnation of the Word or Son who is eternally coming forth from the source of divine life, the Father. Contrary to what is so often said, the classical doctrine of Christ's divine and human nature is not a distortion or a forgetting of the gospel story; it is an admittedly rather abstract way of recognizing what the gospel story as a whole implies, that Jesus is both native and stranger in the human world.

So it is that the experience of mission pushes the Church into Christology: it is the attempt to wrestle with the implications of the extraordinary fact that Jesus is apparently 'recognizable' in places where we should expect him to be foreign, inaccessible. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, lecturing on Christology in the 1930's insisted that we had to begin Christology with the statement of Jesus' presence (Christology, London 1966, p.49): we do not start by asking how the human being Jesus can transcend the ordinary frontiers of historical understanding, nor by asking how God could be bound to a particular time and place: rather, 'The contemporaneity and presence of Jesus Christ in the church are predicates of the one whole person, of the God-man' (p.45). This, I believe, is wholly right, and it immediately puts the doctrinal

structures of classical theology into their proper context, which is that of the communication of the good news. It also takes us back to something I touched on earlier, the centrality of dispossession in this whole process. In the communication of the good news of Jesus, we may often find that we have offered a gift that is welcome, yet is not received as we should expect it to be; Jesus is recognizable, yet the responses that to us seem orthodox or obvious are not necessarily made. This demands of us both patience and courage to let go of the gift into the hands of those who receive it. There must, in the missionary encounter, be sufficient space for the partner to assimilate what Jesus promises in terms that are not dictated by the Christian speaker. If we too hastily seek to specify such terms, we risk saying that Jesus cannot in fact address the other within the context of their own history and identity. Naturally the hope of mission remains visible community, the tangible reality of the sacramental fellow fellowship that is entrusted with the communication of the good news; without this clear focus, linking us to the concrete history of Jesus, making us contemporary with his divine hospitality, the Church is always likely to forget that Jesus is different from the Church, not the Church's possession. But this sacramental practice is itself a letting-go, relinquishing the fantasy that the work of Christ is 'resigned' into our hands; as we take on the role of unworthy

but welcome guests at Christ's table, we proclaim our conviction that he is there before us, in time and space. The very means by which we identify ourselves as Christians tell us that this identity is not something we have of ourselves, by our own choice or ingenuity, but is given by the divine invitation. Thus the identity constituted by belonging with God through Jesus cannot be administered by the institution; it can only come home to another as a gift. When we share the gospel, in other words, we do so in the conscious and explicit awareness that it is still strange to us; that the Jesus we proclaim is not bound to our understanding or our images. How he both belongs to and transcends another culture we cannot in advance specify, though we continue in faith to hold out the structure of the sacramental life as the way of showing both continuity with the historical given-ness of Jesus and our awareness of how we have not mastered him and never shall, since it always he who continues to invite, in the pulpit or at the table or at the font.

Discovering Christology through mission in this way is, of course, discovering Christ through mission. As noted earlier, we come to this task both confident of what we have to proclaim and share, and expectant that our own poverty will be met by Christ in the encounter with new settings in which his presence is to be brought to speech in such a way that it can awaken the pattern of divine action of which Israel's

history speaks, promising and effecting the renewal of community and the reality of forgiveness and reconciliation. We approach the unfamiliar human situation with realism, expecting to find those deformations of the corporate life of which the history of God's covenant people speaks again and again; but also with hope, that the promise we have received will make sense, will kindle longing there. It is appropriate here, I think, to quote a very striking phrase of J.C.Jones himself, in an address on education delivered in 1955: 'We cannot have the boundless confidence which Christ had in men unless we have His awe-inspiring humility in His approach to them' (Edward Lewis, John Bangor. The People's Bishop, London 1962, p.200). The perspective of pluralism which we began by examining may sound superior in terms of humility: it is attractive at first sight to step back from universal hopes and claims, because we are all too aware of the dangers and distortions introduced by our arrogance. But there is another possible understanding of the claim to universal pertinence that the gospel makes: to say that we are invited into the fellowship of the eternal God in such a way that we become able to see the true interests of all human persons as convergent, not in competition, demands of us a deeper humility. It means not the casual theological brutality that writes off the integrity or the depth of another religious tradition, but the patient expectation that here too

we shall find desires that mesh with the desires of God, so that the story of Jesus' transformation of his own traditional religiousness can be a transforming presence here as well. And this involves humility because it involves a letting go of the gift we are given so that it can be truly a gift for those who hear. Unchecked pluralism is not good news; behind it is the real menace of a world of uncontainable and spiralling rivalries or injustices, where justice as the interest of the stronger is the likeliest winner in the moral battle over the foundations of society or international law. Saying that Christ remains the hope of the world, in the sense that he is the surest foundation for discovering how we may be a world at all, rather than a jumble of rivalries, is intellectually and morally risky. And it is always an affirmation of hope, not achievement. But that is why we pursue mission at all, however agnostic we are about what the results will look like. We pursue mission, because it is in the practice of mission that we find the full truth of Christ for ourselves as, we hope, for others; and we go on doing Christology because it makes sense of mission. In both we discover who we are and who we can be in relation to Jesus, the incarnate Word - members of the new humanity, at peace with itself and its maker, dependent on one another for our good, living from the grace of Christ as we live in the community of the mutual creative service. Of this reality, this marriage of heaven and earth,

there will always be more to find, and more to celebrate.

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